

# *Behind the Wheel*

*Tips & Tools for Teenage Drivers, Instructors and Parents*



**Injury Prevention Branch**  
Alabama Department of Public Health

## Introduction

**You may be wondering “Why is there so much attention on teen drivers?”**

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for American teenagers. One in three teen deaths are due to motor vehicle crashes.<sup>1</sup> Young people age 15-24 represents only 14% of the United States population. However, they account for 30% (\$19 billion) of the total costs of motor vehicle injuries among males and 28% (\$7 billion) of the total costs of motor vehicle injuries among females.<sup>2</sup>

*Alabama has the **second** highest rate of teen driver fatalities.*<sup>16</sup>

It is important to educate inexperienced drivers, parents, and educators on teen driver issues and safety. Learning to drive and becoming a good driver does not stop once you have your license. This tool kit is meant to supplement your education and provide additional resources for teens, parents, and educators.

The tool kit will provide information on state and national statistics, restraint and graduated driver’s license laws, how brain development can affect driving, driver distractions, and other conditions that impact safe driving.

Teachers: This tool kit is meant to be used in any classroom, not just driver’s education. There will be sample essay questions for English class, math or physics questions, and general quiz questions that you can use in your classrooms to increase your students’ exposure to driving related issues. There will also be a website resource page that you can use to find additional information, videos, quizzes, and games. Please contact us if you need education materials for other age groups.

Parents: There are teen driver issues and safety materials provided for parents. They will find website resources and a parent-teen contract. I encourage you to include parents in your efforts to educate teens on driving.

Teens: Any section of this tool kit can be copied and handed out to students. There will also be a website resource section that is geared towards teens. Also included is a friend-to-friend driving agreement they can use to promise each other to practice safe driving habits.

For additional information or to order more copies of the tool kit please contact:

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# Let's Get The Facts

Motor vehicle crashes claim over **5,000** teen lives every year.<sup>1</sup> To put this into perspective, our nation lost approximately **3,000** lives on September 11, 2001.

In 2004, approximately **450,000** teens were injured and **27,000** teens were hospitalized after motor vehicle crashes.<sup>1,3</sup>

*"If there was a disease that was wiping out our teenagers at the rate of thousands per year, there would be no end to what we would do as a society to stop that," Jeffrey Runge MD, former head of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.*

Drivers age 16-19 have a crash risk that is:

TWO times that of 20-24 year olds

THREE times that of 25-29 year olds

FOUR times that of 30-69 year olds

Top Factors Involved In These Crashes:<sup>14</sup>

**Driver Inexperience**

**Alcohol**

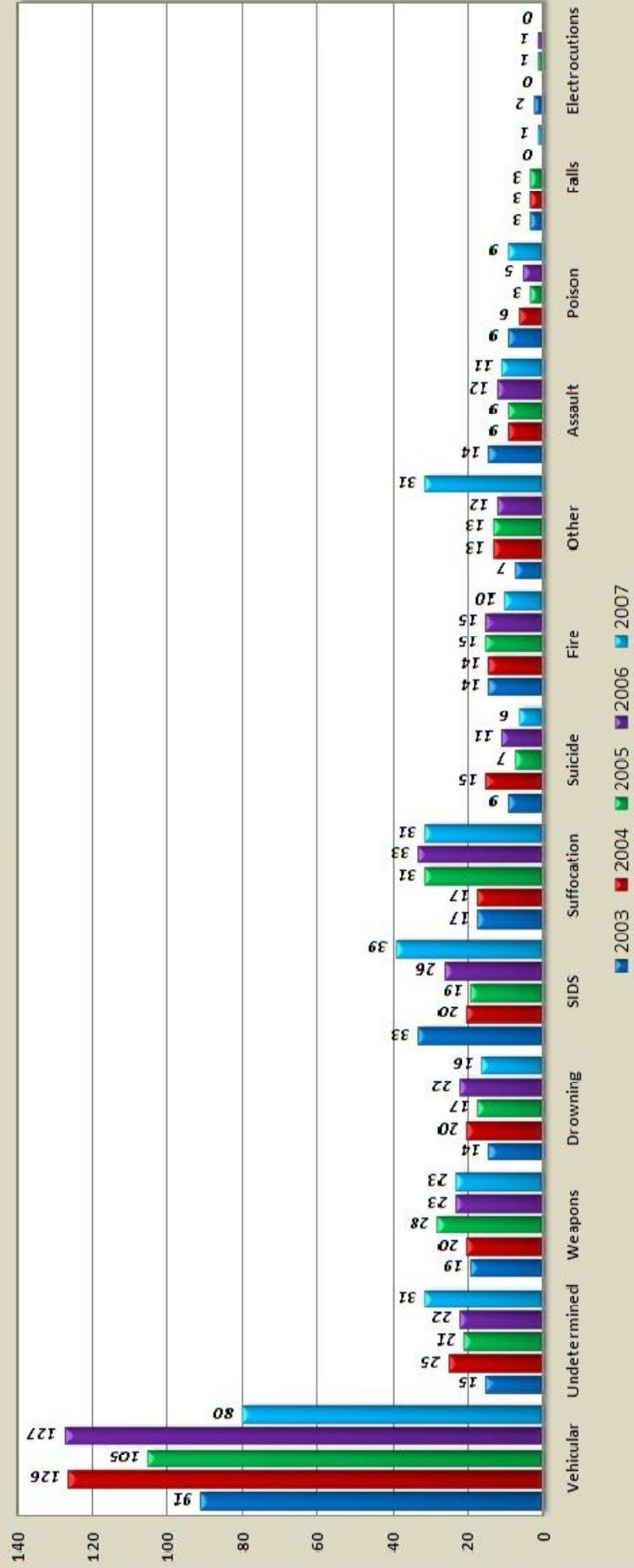
**No Seat Belt**

**Speeding**

**Distractions**

According to the Alabama Child Death Review System, vehicular deaths are the leading cause of *preventable* deaths in our state for those less than 18 years of age. More teens die from car crashes than cancer, suicide, and homicide combined.

## Causes of Child Deaths for Reviewed Cases 2003 - 2007



# Who Is At Risk And Why?

Some teens have a higher risk for motor vehicle crashes than others:

- **Males:** In 2006, male drivers age 15-19 had almost twice the rate of motor vehicle deaths than females of the same age range.
- **Teens with teen passengers:** The presence of teen passengers increases a teen driver's risk of a crash. The risk increases with each additional passenger.
- **Newly licensed driver:** Your crash risk is greatly increased the first year you are eligible to drive on your own.

What are the contributing factors?

- Driver inexperience (this amplifies all other risk factors)
- Not using a seat belt
- Distractions
- Driving at night
- Aggressive or reckless driving
- Speeding
- Fatigue
- Alcohol and/or drug use\*

We will look at most of these risk factors and explain why it is a risk, what can be done to decrease it, and if there are laws that pertain to the risk factor in the state of Alabama.

\*The majority of schools have awareness programs and/or clubs that deal with alcohol and drug use, therefore, only a few facts about this risk factor will be included in the material.

# Driver Inexperience

Teen drivers are at an increased risk of motor vehicle crashes, injuries, and death because of their limited experience behind the wheel. Most people believe that once they have their license they are “experienced,” this is not true.

Every trip in the car can present you with a learning opportunity and with repetition, you will be more prepared to safely handle the same situation in the future. For example, if you only drive in your hometown, on suburban streets, and on sunny days, you will not be prepared for icy roads, on the interstate, or in a new city.

It is best to gradually add new experiences; this helps the young driver learn the techniques of driving before the addition of dangerous situations. Teens are more likely than older drivers to underestimate dangerous conditions or not be able to recognize hazardous situations.<sup>4</sup>

All states now have some form of a graduated driver’s license law. The Graduated Driver License (GDL) Program gradually phases in driving privileges as the new driver gains experience. Each state chooses the amount of behind-the-wheel practice, age, and restrictions. The GDL is not meant to be punitive, it is meant to help teens learn to drive first and then add more situations when they are ready. The goal of programs like this is to help teens learn the responsibilities of driving and safely make it into adulthood.



## Did you know?

**Getting a traffic citation can result in the extension of the graduated license period and/or suspension of the license.**

# Alabama Graduated Driver License

All 50 states have their own version of the graduated driver license with varying degrees of restrictions. Alabama has a three stage system: Learner's Permit, Restricted License, and Unrestricted License.<sup>5</sup>

The Alabama graduated license does not apply to:

- Individuals who are age 18 or older
- Individuals who are age 17 or older who have had a valid driver license for six months or longer
- Individuals who are age 16 or older who are married and considered the head of household
- Individuals who have been legally relieved of minority status (the state or period of being below the legal age)

## **Stage One: Learner's Permit** (supervised driving)

- Must be age 15 or older
- Must complete the written examination and receive a passing grade
- Must be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, or a licensed driver who is age 21 or older and occupying the front seat
- Teens may also drive when accompanied by a licensed or certified driving instructor occupying the front seat
- Must have a minimum of **30 hours** of supervised practice driving<sup>6</sup> or complete driver's education
- Must have a **six month** holding period for the learner's permit stage.<sup>6</sup>

## **Stage Two: Restricted License**

- Must be age 16 or older and have parent/legal guardian's permission
- Must complete road skills examination with a passing grade
- Must not have more than one passenger in the vehicle other than parents, legal guardians, or licensed drivers 21 years of age or older with parental consent.
- Must not use any handheld communication devices while driving
- Cannot operate a vehicle between 12 a.m. (midnight) and 6 a.m., unless:
  - Accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, or driver over 21 with parental consent
  - Going to or from their regular place of work, school-sponsored or religious-sponsored event
  - Driving due to a medical, fire, or law enforcement emergency
  - Driving to or from hunting/fishing activities in possession of required licenses



### **Stage Three: Unrestricted License** (regular license)

- Must be age 17 or older. Those who are age 17 must have a Stage Two license for at least six months before applying for Stage Three license
- Individuals who are age 18 and older may apply immediately for a Stage Three license (passing score on road skills exam is required)

### **Enforcement:**

Violations of any of the graduated driver license law restrictions will result in the restrictive period being extended by six months or until the licensee reaches age 18.

**Watch and discuss the ADPH GDL video:**

**Found on your flash drive or at [www.adph.org/injuryprevention](http://www.adph.org/injuryprevention)**

### ***Class Discussion***

1. Why is there a restriction on using handheld communication devices?
2. What type of devices does this include?
3. Why is there a restriction on the number of passengers?
4. A driver with a learner's permit must complete 30 hours. Do you think this is enough time? Why or why not?
5. For most situations, teens with a GDL cannot drive between the hours of midnight and 6 a.m. Do you understand why this is a restriction?
6. In some states the restriction on nighttime driving begins at 10 p.m. Do you think Alabama should have an earlier driving curfew?
7. Pay attention to the details the next time you hear about a teen vehicle-related death on the news. What do they mention about the accident? Did they wear their seat belt, drive past the curfew, speed, or carry too many passengers? Was alcohol or drugs involved? Could the crash have been prevented?

# Seat Belts

Every 9 seconds, someone is injured in a traffic crash and every 13 minutes someone is killed in a traffic crash.<sup>8</sup>

*In 2007, 80 cases involving child deaths (under age 18), due to motor vehicle involvement, were reviewed by the Alabama Child Death Review System. Forty-one of these deaths (54%) were the result of not using seat belts or other safety restraints.*

Teens have the lowest rate of seat belt use than any age group. Male high school students are more likely to rarely or never wear their seat belts than female students.<sup>7</sup>

The American Academy of Pediatrics' analysis of fatal crashes with teen drivers found that teen's safety belt use is lower in high risk situations (when carrying multiple teen passengers, driving at night, driving in an older vehicle, driving under the influence of alcohol, or when the driver is male).

Medical costs for unbelted crash victims are 50% higher than belted crash victims, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

In 2008, three out of four teen drivers killed after drinking and driving were not wearing their seat belt.<sup>9</sup>



# Alabama Seat Belt Law

When lap and shoulder belts are used correctly they reduce the risk of fatal injury by 45% for front seat passengers.

In Alabama, all front seat passengers are required to wear a seat belt. All children 15 years old and under must be restrained in any seat position in the vehicle. Not wearing a seat belt in the front seat or not having a child properly restrained is a primary offense. This means, law enforcement has the right to pull you over for not wearing a seat belt.

Currently, Alabama does not have a law requiring back seat adult passengers to wear their seat belt. Although it is not a law it is still safer to use a seat belt in all seat positions. Back seat passengers may have more protection in a crash than front seat passengers; however, an unrestrained passenger can become an additional risk to other passengers. As the unrestrained passenger becomes airborne, the other passengers become potential targets for this "human missile." The force of the hit can cause brain damage and death.

*Wearing a seat belt in any seating position of a vehicle protects you, your friends, and family that are sharing the ride with you.*

**Watch and discuss the video entitled No Seat Belt/No Excuse:**

**Found on the Alabama Teen Drivers' Facebook page:**

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Alabama-Teen-Driving/152128111531494>

Do you have trouble remembering to put on your seat belt? Place a reminder in the car. Some Ideas:

- Turn off the radio and place a sticky note on the power button
- Cover the ignition switch with a cup, hat, or whatever you can find
- Put a note on your steering wheel or rearview mirror.

These reminders can help you make it a habit to wear your seat belt on every trip.

## What are some of the reasons given for not wearing a seat belt?

- 1. Feel seat belts are as likely to harm as to help.** In most cases of seat belt related injuries, the individual was improperly wearing it. In general, these injuries happen to children that are too small for adult seat belts and need to be placed in a booster seat. Never wear a shoulder strap without using the lap belt. There will always be a slim possibility that you can become injured wearing your seat belt, however, your risk is greatly increased by not wearing your seat belt during a crash\*. *“Ejection from the vehicle is one of the most injurious events that can happen to a person in a crash. In fatal crashes, 75% of passenger car occupants who were totally ejected from the vehicle were killed.”*<sup>10</sup>
- 2. Teens were more likely to agree that a crash close to home was usually “not as severe.”** Being close to home can lead to a false sense of security. As a driver you need to be just as vigilant close to home for other distracted drivers, pedestrians, or animals running out in front of your car, and continuing to stay alert when you are drowsy. Progressive Insurance found that 77% of their policy holders that were involved in a crash were less than 15 miles from home and more than half were less than five miles from home. If you were to run off the road and strike another car or tree you can become severely injured, regardless of the distance from home.
- 3. Wearing a seat belt makes them “worry more about being in an accident.”** Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for young adults age 16-20. During 2002, a young person died in a traffic crash an average of once every hour on weekends (6 p.m. on Friday through 5:59 a.m. on Monday) and nearly once every two hours during the week.<sup>10</sup> Being prepared for an accident is the mature and safest way to approach driving. Being prepared can also lessen the severity of a crash.
- 4. They feel self-conscious going against the group norm in wearing seat belts.** In 2009, 90% of Alabama drivers surveyed were wearing their seat belt (survey does not specify age of drivers). Not wearing your seat belt is going against the norm.

*\*Using the term accident implies there was nothing that could have been done to prevent the action. The majority of motor vehicle fatalities are the result of careless or distracted drivers, speeding, or intoxication.*

# Child Safety Restraints

The back seat is the safest place for children to ride. All children should ride in the back seat until they are 14 years old.

You may have to transport a small child at some point whether it is a child you are baby-sitting, a sibling, or your own child. It is important to know the laws regarding child safety restraints.

## **Alabama Law:** (Effective July 1, 2006)

Every person transporting a child in a motor vehicle must provide protection for the child by properly using a child restraint system. Any person violating this law will be fined \$25.00.

A child:

1. **Birth to Age 1 or 20 pounds:** Infant only seats and convertible seats used in the rear-facing position.
2. **Age 1 or 20 pounds to age 5 or 40 pounds:** Convertible seats in the forward position or forward-facing seat.
3. **Age 5 or 40 pounds to age 6:** Booster seat
4. **Age 6 to Age 15:** Seat belt

The **American Academy of Pediatrics** and the **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration** recommends:

1. **Infants:** Should ride rear-facing until they reach the maximum weight or height allowed by their car safety seat's manufacturer.
2. **Toddlers/Preschoolers:** It is best for children to ride rear-facing for as long as possible. When the child has outgrown their rear-facing seat they should use a forward-facing seat with a full (three point or five point) harness until they reach the maximum weight and height requirements allowed by the seat manufacturer.
3. **School-aged children:** Once a child has outgrown their forward-facing seat they should use a booster seat. The booster seat should be used until the child properly fits in the adult seat belt.
4. **Older children:** When the child has outgrown their booster seat they should use a lap and shoulder belt.

# Child Safety Restraints

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recommends that children who are 40 pounds and under eight years old, unless they are **4'9"** tall, should be in a booster seat.

## ***Why should they be in a booster seat?***

Seat belts are designed for adults, not children. The shoulder belt should cross the chest and rest snugly on the shoulder, not touching the neck. The lap belt should be across the pelvis or hip bones, not over the stomach or abdomen.

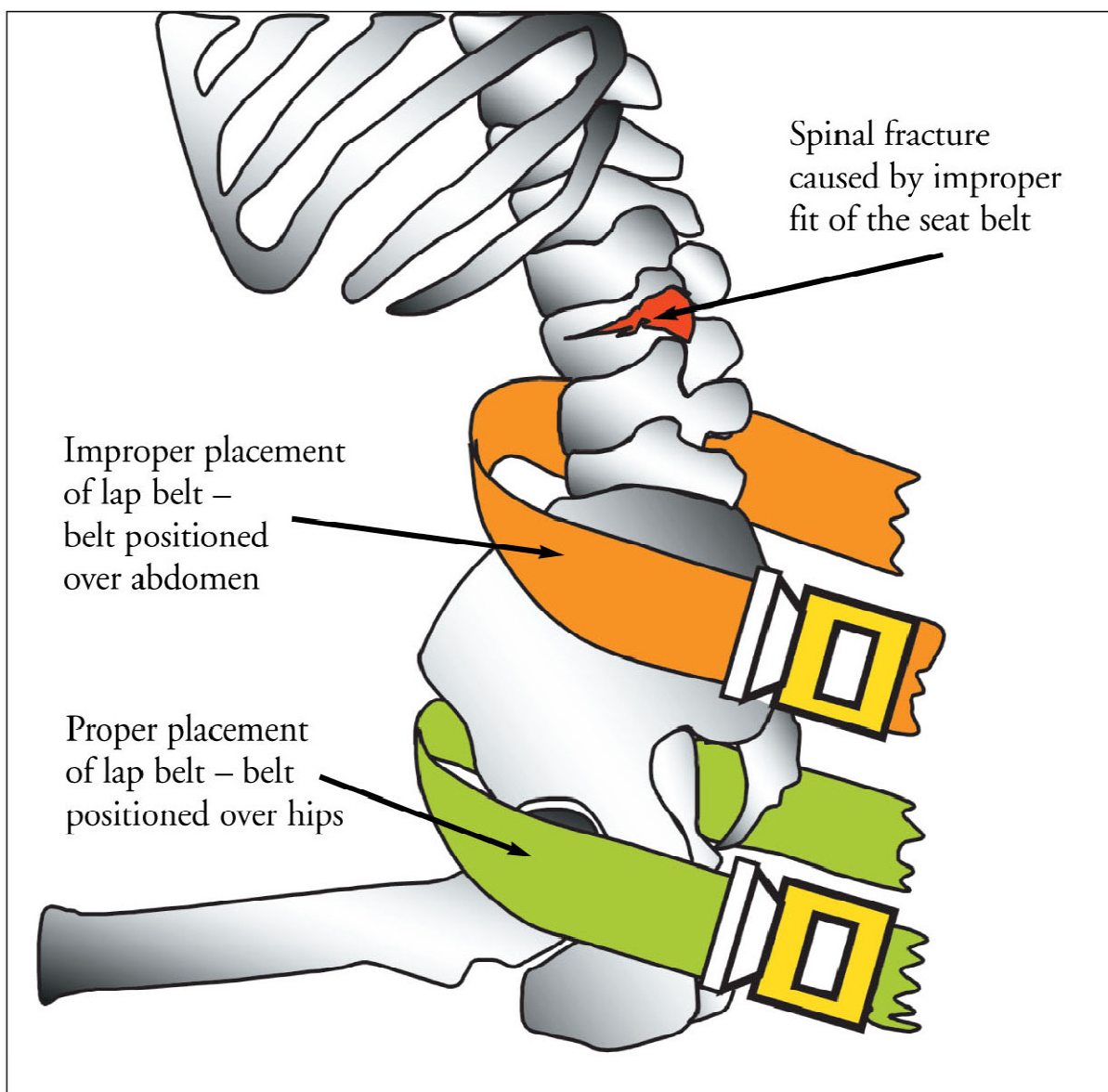
If a child was wearing a seat belt that was not fitting properly, they could receive additional injuries in a wreck; the belt could injure internal organs. A booster seat "boosts" the child into a position that makes the seat belt fit safely and securely.

## **Need help installing a car seat or booster seat?**

To find certified child safety seat inspection station, visit: <http://www.cpsalabama.org/> or [www.adph.org/injuryprevention](http://www.adph.org/injuryprevention).

# Seat Belt Syndrome

## Improper Versus Proper Positioning of a Lap Belt



An improperly fitted seat belt can lead to “Seat Belt Syndrome,” which can include spinal fractures and abdominal organ injuries. Always place belt across hips and not over abdomen.

Source: Partners for Child Passenger Safety Study  
Copyright© 2004 by The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia  
<http://stokes.chop.edu/>

# Speeding

Fun Fact: The first speeding ticket was given out in January 1896 for going 8 mph.

Speeding is defined as exceeding the posted speed limit or driving too fast for the road and weather conditions. Speeding is a factor in about one-third of all fatal crashes. According to the American College of Emergency Physicians, the government has estimated the economic cost of speed related crashes is more than 40 billion dollars per year. Excessive speed reduces a drivers' ability to react to unexpected road hazards. It also increases the distance needed for braking, and can increase the severity of a crash. In 2004, speeding was a factor in 30% of fatal crashes killing an average of 1,000 people a month.<sup>15</sup> Speeding is a factor in 40% of teen driver fatalities.<sup>14</sup>

The National Safety Council states that your chance of dying in a crash doubles for every 10 mph that you travel above 50 mph. A vehicle's kinetic energy increases exponentially as the speed increases. This increase in energy requires a greater stopping distance. If a vehicle's speed doubles, the driver will need four times the distance to stop the vehicle. If a vehicle's speed triples, it will take nine times the distance to stop. Greater stopping distances mean you have less time to react to hazards or changes in the road conditions. An increase in speed will increase your vehicles stopping distance, reduce your control of the vehicle, and increase the force of impact.<sup>16</sup>

*Who is the most likely to speed:*

*Teens*

*Male Drivers*

*Intoxicated Drivers*

In 2004, 40% of intoxicated drivers involved in fatal crashes were speeding.<sup>16</sup> Alcohol impaired drivers are more likely to speed. Speeding drivers are less likely to wear their seat belts. Combining no seat belt use with alcohol and speeding is a deadly combination.

## **Did You Know?**

Driving the speed limit can increase fuel efficiency and decrease wear to the tires and engine.



# Driver Distractions

FYI: Listening to music with headphones/ear buds on while you drive can prevent you from hearing an ambulance or police sirens.

What is distracted driving? Distracted driving is any non-essential activity a person engages in that has the potential to distract the driver from the primary task of operating a motor vehicle.<sup>11</sup> Distracted driving increases your risk of a crash.

There are three main types of distractions:

- **Visual** - Takes your eyes off the road
- **Manual** - Takes your hands off the wheel
- **Cognitive** - Takes your mind off what you are doing

## Class Discussion

1. Can you give examples of visual distractions?
2. Can you give examples of manual distractions?
3. Can you give examples of cognitive distractions?
4. Can you give examples of distractions that involve all three?

Examples:

- Texting - involves all three types of distractions
- Using electronic devices (cell phones, PDAs, Navigation systems)
- Talking to other passengers
- Changing the radio station, MP3 player, or CD
- Eating or drinking
- Grooming
- Dancing or singing
- Reading
- Daydreaming or dealing with strong emotions
- Looking at outside person, object, or event

**Watch and discuss ATT's The Last Text Documentary:**

**Found on your flash drive or at [www.adph.org/injuryprevention](http://www.adph.org/injuryprevention)**

# Driver Distraction Facts

Nearly half of crash-involved teens reported violating the passenger restrictions more than a few times.

Eighty percent of crashes and 65% of near crashes involve some sort of driver distraction within the three seconds before the event.<sup>10</sup> A vehicle can cover the length of a football field in five seconds going 55 mph.

*A car pulls out in front of you or slams on their brakes. A pedestrian crosses the road. A child on a bicycle pulls out between two parked cars. Any of these situations and more could occur during the time it takes you to travel the distance of a football field. If you are distracted, will you be able to stop in time?*

Distracted driving can lead to serious injury or death after a vehicle crash. In 2009, 5,474 people were killed and an estimated 448,000 people were injured in the United States in motor vehicle crashes that were reported to involve distracted drivers.<sup>10</sup> Of those deaths, 18% were due to cell phone distractions.<sup>10</sup>

Drivers under 20 years old were reported as having the greatest percentage of driving distractions. Sixteen percent of that age group involved in fatal crashes, were reported to have been distracted while driving. Below we will discuss three common distractions: talking on a cell phone, texting, and passengers.

**Cell Phones:** The NHTSA estimates that 11% of all drivers are using cell phones while driving. Cell phone use while driving reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37%. The National Safety Council estimates that cell phones were being used during crashes for more than one in four motor vehicles. In 2008, an estimated 1.4 million crashes involved talking on cell phones.

Are hands free cell phones safer? The answer is no. But why? Using a hands free device still involves cognitive distraction and can lead to "Inattention Blindness." Inattention blindness (or perceptual blindness) is a phenomenon of not being able to perceive things in plain sight. It is similar to tunnel vision in that the driver may be looking out of the windshield, but fails to see up to 50% of the information in their driving environment.<sup>12</sup> People often do not realize they are cognitively distracted and so the risky behavior lasts longer leading to an increased risk of crashes. For example, a driver may not notice other vehicles stopped at a red light and they might run straight through it into oncoming traffic even though they were looking straight ahead.

**\*Using a cell phone while driving can be as dangerous as driving intoxicated.<sup>13</sup>**

**Texting:** An estimated 200,000 motor vehicle crashes involved texting while driving. Drivers are 23 times as likely to crash while texting. Texting involves all three types of distractions: visual, manual, and cognitive. You take your eyes off the road to read an incoming text or to reply. You take your hand off the wheel to push the buttons on the phone. You take your mind off of driving while reading, thinking about, and responding to a text message.

*Look at the last text you received. Read it out loud to your class. Would reading or responding to that text message from behind the wheel of a moving vehicle be worth getting into a car wreck? Is there any message that is so important that it cannot wait until you have safely pulled off the road to respond?*

### **Class room activity:**

Have a student open his or her textbook. Give them a specific word to find on the page during a five second time frame (word needs to be used only once on the page or document). This five second time frame correlates to the average time it takes to read or send a text message. Would you be able to scan the document and drive at the same time? Scanning the document trying to find one word in a short time period gives an example of the visual and cognitive distractions a driver faces while texting. In that same time frame they may have driven the length of a football field.

**Passengers:** Why does the presence of passengers, especially teen passengers, increase the risk of a motor vehicle crash? Passengers can cause additional distractions by talking, dancing/singing in the car, changing radio stations, or pointing to outside people, objects, and events. They may also influence or increase risk taking behaviors such as speeding, driving past curfew, not wearing a seat belt, or driving while intoxicated.

### **Did you know?**

**Two out of three people killed in crashes, involving teen drivers, are people other than the teen driver. This may include the passengers of the teen driver, occupants of other vehicles, motorcyclists/bicyclists, and pedestrians.**

**Alabama**  
**Texting and Electronic Device Bans by City**  
**July 2011**

<b>CITY</b>	<b>BANNED WHILE DRIVING</b>	<b>ENFORCEMENT</b>	<b>FINE</b> (violations within 12 month period)
Adamsville	All wireless handheld devices, except phone calls		\$100
Alabaster	(No ban)		
Athens	All wireless handheld devices, except phone calls	Primary	1 <sup>st</sup> offense: \$100 or 10 days in jail 2 <sup>nd</sup> offense: \$200 or 30 days in jail 3 <sup>rd</sup> offense: \$500 or 3 months in jail
Auburn		Secondary	
Birmingham	Texting		\$100
Chickasaw	All wireless devices to text or download data		\$100
Daphne	All wireless devices to text or download data	Secondary	\$100-200 with possible jail time
Decatur	All wireless handheld devices, except phone calls	Primary	1 <sup>st</sup> offense: \$100 2 <sup>nd</sup> offense: Up to \$500 and possible jail time
Demopolis	Texting		1 <sup>st</sup> offense: \$50 or 10 days in jail 2 <sup>nd</sup> offense: Up to \$100 3 <sup>rd</sup> offense: Up to \$500
Fairhope	Email, instant message, and texting		1 <sup>st</sup> offense: \$100 or 10 days in jail 2 <sup>nd</sup> offense: \$200 or 30 days in jail 3 <sup>rd</sup> offense: \$500 or Up to 3 months in jail
Florence	Texting	Primary	1 <sup>st</sup> offense: \$100 and possible 10 days in jail 2 <sup>nd</sup> offense: \$200 and possible 20 days in jail 3 <sup>rd</sup> offense: Up to \$500 and possible 30 days in jail
Gadsden	Texting	Secondary	1 <sup>st</sup> offense: \$25 2 <sup>nd</sup> offense: \$50 3 <sup>rd</sup> offense: \$75

Heflin	Email, instant message, and texting		1 <sup>st</sup> offense: \$50 or up to 10 days in jail 2 <sup>nd</sup> offense: \$100 or up to 30 days in jail 3 <sup>rd</sup> offense: up to \$500 or up to 3 months in jail
Huntsville	Texting and other electronic devices	Secondary	1 <sup>st</sup> offense: \$100 2 <sup>nd</sup> offense: Up to \$500 and possible jail time
Jacksonville	Texting		1 <sup>st</sup> offense: \$25 2 <sup>nd</sup> offense: \$50 3 <sup>rd</sup> offense: \$75
Madison	All wireless handheld devices, except phone calls	Secondary	1 <sup>st</sup> offense: \$100 2 <sup>nd</sup> offense: \$200 3 <sup>rd</sup> offense: \$500
Midfield	Texting		\$100
Montgomery	Handheld cell phones and texting	Secondary	1 <sup>st</sup> offense: \$50 or 10 days in jail 2 <sup>nd</sup> offense: \$100-500 and possible jail time
Prattville	Texting	Primary	1 <sup>st</sup> offense: \$50 2 <sup>nd</sup> offense: Up to \$100 or 30 days in jail 3 <sup>rd</sup> offense: Up to \$500 or 3 months in jail
Roanoke	Texting or emailing		1 <sup>st</sup> offense: \$50 or 10 days in jail Subsequent offenses: Up to \$500 or 3 months in jail
Scottsboro	Texting		1 <sup>st</sup> offense: \$25-100 2 <sup>nd</sup> offense: \$50-250
Spanish Fort	All wireless communication devices, except phone calls and GPS devices	Primary	1 <sup>st</sup> offense: \$100 or 10 days in jail 2 <sup>nd</sup> offense: \$200 or Up to 30 days in jail 3 <sup>rd</sup> offense: \$500 or Up to 3 months in jail
Vestavia Hills	All wireless handheld devices, except phone calls		\$100

**\*The cities written in red have information missing.**

This list was updated in July 2011. Several cities had pending legislation and you may want to look up your own town or city to find out the current law.

***\*\*It is important to remember that anyone with a graduated driver's license is banned from using electronic devices while driving. A citation could result in an extension of the graduated license period.***

### **Class Discussion**

1. Do you text or talk on your cell phone while driving? Does your parents? Friends? Do you think a law banning this will change your habits?
2. Do you think passing local or state laws banning the use of cell phones while driving will decrease the number of distracted driving wrecks? Why or why not?
3. What additional ways can you persuade others to not text or talk on their cell phone while operating a motor vehicle?
4. Have you offered to make calls or return texts, operate GPS, or other devices for the driver of a vehicle you were riding in? How can you help the driver be less distracted?

### **Quiz Questions:**

1. Texting while driving is equivalent to consuming:
  - a) 2 alcoholic drinks
  - b) 0 alcoholic drinks
  - c) 4 alcoholic drinks
  - d) 6 alcoholic drinks

Answer: Texting while driving is equivalent to consuming FOUR alcoholic beverages.

2. True or False. Talking on a cell phone or texting while driving is a skill that you can learn to do safely.

Answer: False. This is not a skill that you can learn to do safely. If you need to make a call or read/send a text find a safe place to pull over before picking up your phone.

# Other Conditions That Impact Safe Driving

Did you know?  
Being awake for 18 hours is  
similar to having a blood  
alcohol concentration of 0.08.

**Night Driving:** Why are new drivers not allowed to drive late at night? The National Safety Council states that teen drivers with passengers are four or five times as likely to crash, per mile driven, at night than teen drivers driving alone during the day. Teenagers are twice as likely to crash between the hours of 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. There can be several reasons. The human eye does not see as well at night. We also lose a great deal of our visual field. Headlights on a vehicle only cover so many feet in front of a vehicle. It may be hard to see the beginning of a dangerous curve, potholes, and even animals that run out in front of a vehicle. New drivers fail to realize the danger of night driving and drive the same way they do during the day; sometimes at increased speeds and with passengers. The Texas Transportation Institute conducted a study and found that over 80% of teens named alcohol as a driving risk, but only 3% of teens are aware that driving at night is risky. Few realize that night time driving magnifies the risk of their inexperience. Add with that fatigue and distractions like cell phones and it can create a perfect environment for a collision. Teens that die as a result of motor vehicle wrecks late at night are also less likely to have been wearing their seat belt.

**Fatigue:** The National Sleep Foundation states that most teenagers need approximately nine hours of sleep at night, but most get less than seven hours. Fatigue, especially late at night, can impair driving similar to intoxication. Over 100,000 motor vehicle wrecks occur each year due to drowsiness or falling asleep behind the wheel. Your brain needs sleep to function and will force you to fall asleep whether or not you are ready. If you feel tired stay at home and if you are out, call someone to give you a ride home. It is also important to be aware of other drivers that may be driving drowsy or intoxicated.

## ***Did You Know?***

**Highway Hypnosis is a state in which the driver is able to drive long distances, responding to external events, without conscious memory of doing so. A condition of drowsiness or unawareness brought on by monotony. To prevent this and fatigue, remember to take short breaks on long driving distances. Move your eyes from side to side and read signs as they pass by on the road.**

# Other Conditions That Impact Safe Driving

Did you know?  
Most insurance plans will not cover the cost of damage if you wreck driving on closed roads during winter weather storms?

**Weather:** It is important to practice driving with an adult in different weather conditions. Driving on a sunny day will not prepare you to drive at night during a thunderstorm. Will you be prepared to drive across black ice in the winter? How will you handle hydroplaning during a hard rain? Will you have the same visibility? Do you need to decrease your speed? Can you delay your trip until the weather conditions are more favorable? A lot of times we fail to realize that we will encounter these conditions and that we need to prepare for them in advance.

**Medication:** Some medications have warning labels that the medicine can make you drowsy. Do not operate heavy machinery. You may feel fine one minute and the next you cannot keep your eyes open. It is important to remember this fact. You may have to delay driving or delay using the medication until you are safely at your destination. Always read the label, and if you are unsure, ask your parents if they are comfortable with you driving after using a certain medication.

**Emotions:** Strong emotions can impact your driving ability. This relates back to the cognitive distractions. If you are angry, sad, or daydreaming, you will be unable to focus all of your attention on the task at hand. This is important for both drivers and passengers. If you are a passenger, do not start a discussion with the driver that could lead to strong emotions. Wait until you have reached your destination to discuss those matters.

**Reckless Driving:** Speeding, aggressive driving, tailgating, and thrill seeking all lead to increased risk for collisions in all drivers, especially teens. It is higher in teens because more teens engage in this risky behavior. Combine bad weather and speeding, along with a newly licensed driver that is easily distracted and you can see why there are so many restrictions on the new driver. Can you name some thrill seeking behaviors that can lead to collisions?

Not all poor driving decisions are deliberate; some poor choices may be due to lack of brain development. This will be discussed on the next page. Knowing this can help you adjust your mindset and driving style accordingly.



# Brain Development

Why are we discussing brain development? The adolescent brain does not process actions and consequences at the same level as the adult brain. The human brain is still developing and will continue to grow and mature until around the age of 24 or 25.

The pre-frontal cortex is still forming during adolescence. This part of the brain is responsible for complex cognitive behaviors, personality expression, decision making, weighing consequences, and moderating social behavior. Reasoning and judgment are still being developed. This may make you more susceptible to peer pressure. Stressful and emotional decisions make it hard to make rational decisions. Teens take more risks and are more impulsive without realizing the danger or why they do it.

You may make good grades, work a part-time job, and play sports, but you can still make poor decisions. Knowing that your decision making abilities are still being developed means it is wise to take extra precautions while driving.

The neural pathways are also continuing to develop at this stage. They are being formed and pruned. The phrase “Use It or Lose It” refers to this process. Repetition creates neural pathways. The more you practice safe driving the more it reinforces that pathway.

As your brain develops you may make different decisions under calm conditions than you would under stressful or highly excitable conditions. One example is the addition of passengers in the vehicle. Young drivers take more driving risks when their friends are present in the vehicle. This is why there are passenger restrictions with the graduated driver’s license.

## **Class Discussion**

Have students bring in news articles related to motor vehicle collisions involving teenagers.

1. Was the cause of the collision listed?
2. Was speeding or reckless driving involved?
3. Did the driver violate the night-time driving or passenger restrictions?
4. Were any serious injuries or deaths reported?
5. Could this have been prevented? How?
6. Do you know anyone that was seriously injured or died in a collision? Did this change your driving habits?

# LESSON PLANS

# DISTRACTED DRIVING LESSON PLAN

Description: This lesson plan will educate students on the dangers of driving while distracted.

## Learning Objectives:

- Students will have a better understanding of the risks of driving while distracted
- Teen drivers will gain perspective in recognizing unsafe driving situations and selecting the correct reaction or response

## Additional Tools:

Video:

- [www.oprah.com/oprahshow/americas-new-deadly-obsession-partial-episode-video](http://www.oprah.com/oprahshow/americas-new-deadly-obsession-partial-episode-video)
- ATT's The Last Text Documentary

Websites:

- [www.distractions.gov](http://www.distractions.gov)
- [http://www.nsc.org/SAFETY\\_ROAD/Pages/safety\\_on\\_the\\_road.aspx](http://www.nsc.org/SAFETY_ROAD/Pages/safety_on_the_road.aspx)

## Activity One:

There are three types of distractions: visual, manual, and cognitive. Divide the board into three columns. Have the students list examples of the three types of distractions in each column. Make a note of which examples are in more than one section (i.e., texting involves all three types of distractions, so it should be listed in each column).

Have students discuss these examples. Are some of these distractions worse than others? Why or why not? How many of these distractions can be avoided by their actions? Is it something that can be prevented? If not, what can they do as a driver to respond and make the driving situation safer?

## **Activity Two:**

Are the distractions outside the vehicle, inside, or internal? Make a list of these distractions.

Examples:

- A deer crosses the road
- Changing the radio station
- Taking medication that makes you drowsy

For each example given, have students discuss the distraction. Is it something they have encountered? Do they see it as a risk for causing a crash? Have they seen any news reports or articles on crashes that resulted from any of the distractions mentioned? How many of these crashes would have been prevented if the driver had not been distracted?

## **Activity Three:**

Divide students into groups of two, three, or four. Have each group choose one of the previously mentioned distractions (each group should pick a different distraction). Once they have chosen their distraction have them create a poster. The poster can include statistics, definitions, what are the consequences of that distraction, and how a driver can avoid it. During a following class, have each group present their poster. The posters can then be used as a Public Service Announcement and posted around the school to remind other students of the dangers of distracted driving.

*\*If students prefer, they can create a video PSA. The school can vote for the winning video and the video can be added to the Alabama Teen Drivers' Facebook page.*

# National Youth Traffic Safety Month Lesson Plan

## “Save the Drama: Wear a Seat Belt”



**LESSON TOPIC:** Promoting the Use of Seat Belts

This lesson is designed to be used for both middle and high school students. Please feel free to adapt it to fit your curriculum goals and time constraints.

### **WHAT’S THE POINT?**

- Students will learn the dangers of driving or riding without a seat belt.
- Students will express their thoughts related to driving or riding with seat belts.
- Students will practice responding to circumstances related to seat belt use.

### **MATERIALS**

Student handout

### **FOCUSING EVENT**

Share the following statistic with the students: “Compared with other age groups, teens have the lowest rate of seat belt use.”

Ask students why they think this is the case. Why are some teens not wearing seat belts?

Share this statistic with the students: “Two-thirds of those killed in car crashes were not wearing seat belts.” Ask students if they were surprised by this statistic. Emphasize that wearing a seat belt is a very important thing to do.

Students should complete the writing exercise on their handout.

Reproducible for Classroom Use: [www.noys.org](http://www.noys.org)

## TEACHING STEPS

1. Students should share the answers to the writing exercise.
2. Students should then be placed into cooperative learning groups. Each group should be given one of the following hypothetical situations:
  - a. You are riding with one of your friends to the mall to get a birthday present. Your friend doesn't buckle up. When you ask them to, they respond by saying, "It's no big deal." What would you do?
  - b. You are riding home from soccer practice with a parent of a friend. They are not wearing a seat belt. What would you do?
  - c. You really like this boy (or girl) in your English class. You are out on a date to the latest movie. They say that it's not cool to wear a seat belt. What would you do?
  - d. Your mom is taking you to school one morning, and she is not wearing her seat belt. She says she is a safe driver and doesn't worry about wearing one. What would you do?
3. Each group should create a skit based on their scenario.
4. The skit should promote the message that wearing a seat belt is a very important thing.
5. Each group should also create three discussion questions based on their skit. These discussion questions should be used after the skit to generate some thought about each situation and how to effectively promote the use of seat belts. Students should make sure that the discussion questions do not just have a yes or no answer.

## EVALUATION

Students should be evaluated on their responses during the writing exercise and also during the participation in their group. Groups should be evaluated during their work time and also while they are presenting their skits. Having an audience of younger or older students to watch the skits would make the exercise more meaningful for those involved.

## SOURCES

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/teenmvh.htm>

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/airbags/buasbteens03/index.htm>

Reproducible for Classroom Use

[www.noys.org](http://www.noys.org)

# Discovery Education

## Lesson Title: Safe Driving

**Subject Area:** Health

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Duration:** Two class periods

### Objectives:

Students will do the following:

- Study the potential dangers, risks, and statistics associated with a variety of road safety issues: impaired driving, not wearing seat belts, speeding, distracted driving, and drowsy driving
- Develop a public service announcement such as a poster, mock television or radio commercial, website, or brochure about a road safety issue

### Materials:

- Newsprint
- Internet Access
- Poster board, paper, markers, color printer, video cameras, tape recorder, or other materials for students' public service announcement projects

### Procedures:

1. Explain to students that according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among Americans up to 34 years old. Factors such as alcohol consumption, high-speed driving, and other dangerous behaviors contribute to these crashes. Most crashes could be avoided by following common safety practices. The focus of this lesson is to learn about safe practices and laws designed to prevent crashes.
2. On the chalkboard, draw two columns for the "do's and don'ts" of driving. Ask students to brainstorm about items for both lists.

Example:

<b>Do</b>	<b>Don't</b>
Wear your seat belt	Drive under the influence of alcohol
Pay attention	Drive about the speed limit
Obey traffic laws	Pass a stopped school bus
Reduce speed at night and in bad weather	Drive if you are sleepy

3. After discussing the lists, talk about why it's important to educate the public about safety issues. Explain that in this lesson students will explore one of five safe driving issues and create their own public safety announcement.
4. Divide students into five groups and assign one of the following topics to each group:
  - a. Impaired driving (DUI/DWI)
  - b. Seat belts
  - c. Speeding
  - d. Distracted driving
  - e. Drowsy driving
5. Have students use the websites below to research the safety issues. Encourage them to take notes about the dangers, risks, and statistics. Make sure students include examples of trauma that may occur when safety practices are not followed.

### **All Topics\***

#### Safety Fact Sheets

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>

Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS; see Did You Know? and Reports)

<http://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/>

Insurance Institute for Highway Safety

<http://www.highwaysafety.org/>

<http://library.thinkquest.org/23713/frameset.html>

<http://www.nsc.org/library/facts/drnkdriv.html>

<http://www.sadd.org>

[www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety](http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety)

<http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov>

<http://www.aaafoundation.org/projects>

<http://www.nsc.org/safety-road>

6. Have each group develop a public service announcement such as a poster, mock television or radio commercial, website, or brochure for high school students. Encourage them to use statistics and specific state laws from their research and anecdotes or stories from personal experiences. Students should include descriptions about the bodily injuries that can occur as a result of unsafe driving.
7. After each group has presented its public service announcement, discuss the issues as a class. Which statistics did they find most surprising? How do they think their driving will change after what they've learned?

\*Updated from the original lesson plan



**Discussion Questions:**

1. Imagine a friend has had a few beers and is about to drive home from a party. What would you say to persuade him or her not to drive?
2. Your friend has just bought a new car and wants to take you for a ride. He or she is driving through your neighborhood 20 miles over the speed limit. What would you say?
3. A defensive driver anticipates danger to avoid accidents. Give examples of defensive driving.

**Credit:**

Joy Brewster, a freelance writer and editor of educational material.

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# Toyota Teen Driver and Discovery Education Lesson Plan: Dealing With Distractions

**Grade:** 9-12

## **Objectives:**

Students will be able to:

- Identify key factors associated with teenage traffic collisions
- Understand the responsibilities of a newly licensed driver
- Gain a better understanding of consequences associated with inexperienced and distracted driving
- Discuss ways in which behaviors affect safe driving
- Discuss ways to improve their driving
- Identify the rules and allowances of their State Graduated Drivers License Policy

## **Activity 1:**

Ask students to think about a recent accident they witnessed or learned about on the evening news. Relate:

- A brief description of the crash and the drivers (adults or teenagers)
- The apparent cause(s) of the crash
- The consequences (was anyone injured or killed; what was the damage to the car or other property)
- Brainstorm a master list of the apparent causes of crashes where teenagers were the drivers. Compare the class list to the following list of common factors associated with traffic crashes involving teenagers:
  - Speeding
  - Driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol
  - Texting or talking on the phone
  - Changing the radio station/adjusting iPod or other MP3 device
  - Having been deprived of sleep
  - Putting on make-up, fixing hair
  - Eating or drinking
  - Showing off for friends/passengers
  - Following too close
  - Making unsafe lane changes
  - Looking at a traffic crash or broken down vehicle on the side of the roadway
  - Misjudge speed and/or distance

How many of the common factors did your class identify? Discuss each of the common factors for clarity. After the discussion, prioritize the common factors as to the cause of most crashes. Conduct research on the Internet or contact the community

relations office at your local police department to determine if your class has prioritized the list correctly. Create a Digital Infomercial or a Digital Vlog for publication in your community or school newspaper, addressing one of the common factors. Include in your Digital Infomercial or Digital Vlog video clips, images, articles, interviews, or other Internet resources you deem effective to make your presentation persuasive.

## **Activity 2:**

Did you know some fatal crashes occur because a person may be changing a CD or radio channel? Or they may be on a cell phone? Or texting? Look at a classmate to your left or right; how many pieces of jewelry is that person wearing? How many classmates have cell phones? How many text on a regular basis? Many fatal crashes in which 16-year-olds were driving involve only the teen's vehicle. Typically, these crashes were high-speed where the driver lost control. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), driver error accounts for 75% of fatal crashes among 16-year-olds, 68% of deadly crashes among 17-year-olds, and 54% of fatal crashes among those who are between the ages of 20 and 49.

Create a Digital Prevention Plan in which you research, record, and report on how extraneous factors, such as jewelry, applying make-up, texting, cell calls, or clothes have been a catalyst for an accident. Include in your Digital Prevention Plan video clips, images, interviews, articles, and other Internet resources you deem useful. As a class, present all of your Digital Prevention Plans to your school audience and then make them available for review in the library as reminders for safe driving. In addition, if your school has daily or weekly televised news, present one Digital Prevention Plan per week or per day.

## **References:**

- U.S. Department of Transportation
- Official U.S. Government Website for Distracted Driving
- Put It Down Campaign
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Statistics and Facts about Distracted Driving. Based on the 2008 National Occupant Protection Use Survey [online]. [Cited 2008 June 2–22]. Available from URL: <http://www.distracted.gov/stats-and-facts/#what>
- AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. 2009 Traffic Safety Culture Index. [Cited 2009 July]. Available from URL: <http://www.aaafoundation.org/pdf/2009TSCIndexFinalReport.pdf>
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Policy Statement and Compiled Facts on Distracted Driving. [Online]. Available from URL: <http://nhtsa.gov/>

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# Impact Teen Drivers

## LESSON PLAN: Audience Interaction

### *Ideas for Audience Interaction*

*Here are some ideas for additional interactive approaches to get the message across and the audience involved. Just keep in mind that there is no right or wrong way to deliver the message, as long as it is delivered in such a way that the audience is impacted. These are intended to create a “big picture” of the topic in the minds of the audience.*

### **Circle of Life**

- ✓ In advance, prepare a large card with each bullet point item below on a separate card (for a total of five) with a string attached to be hung around someone’s neck:
  - o Mom, Dad, Sister and Brother
  - o Extended Family
  - o Friends
  - o Classmates
  - o Teammates
- ✓ Call up six volunteers and have them stand in a line across the front of the room. Hang a card around the necks of five of them.
- ✓ Explain each bullet point below:
  - o “Each of us has a life circle made up of people who care about us and who we care about. That is what these cards represent (read the cards around the necks).”
  - o “As events happen in our lives, it causes the lives of our life circle to become connected and intertwined. As I say three different common events in the life of a teen, I will have this group demonstrate a visual or big picture, of a single person’s life circle.”
  - o “All of my volunteers need to join hands to make a circle. This will represent the life circle of (hold the shoulders of the volunteer without a card – ask their name). As I state each event, lift up your arms and the people across from you can go under or one of you can turn around under your own arms. But whatever you do, don’t let go of hands.”
- **Scenario #1:** “(name) invites his/her family to the school Open House and when they come, they meet classmates.” (intertwine the circle)
- **Scenario #2:** “(name) is an athlete and when his/her friends and family come to watch the game, they meet each other as well as the teammates.” (intertwine the circle)
- **Scenario #3:** “(name) has a movie night or birthday party at his/her house and his/her classmates, teammates, as well as friends come to his/her family home.” (intertwine the circle)

- o “Okay, now let’s have only (name) let go of hands. As I pull him/her out of their life circle, this represents what happens when distracted driving kills someone. They are removed from their life circle. And all those lives that were connected to them are now disconnected and unraveled due to that loss. Volunteers, without letting go of your hands, please unwind back into a straight line.”
- ✓ Suggestion: This is a good time to show the Classroom Video, asking the audience to pay attention to the life circle that was broken and all the people who were affected (referring to Donovan from the video: Impact Teen Driver website).

### **Missing From The Center**

- ✓ Have the audience draw a picture of themselves in the center of a paper.
- ✓ In each of the corners, draw a picture or word describing someone they care about.
- ✓ Fold the paper twice to create a square then tear the center (point) off with a large section removed.
- ✓ Open the paper. The hole in the center represents you missing from the lives of those you care for and those who care for you if distracted driving was to cause your death.

### **Activities**

These are intended to engage the audience through dialogue and action by using an example related to distracted driving habits.

### **Riding The Experience**

- ✓ Have students sit in groups of five like they are in a car: two (in the front seat) and three (in the back seat).
- ✓ Call one of the back seat passengers forward and huddle with all of them to quietly tell them that when the music starts they are to get up and continually walk around the outside edges of the car group, trying to distract the others.
- ✓ With all seated again, have all students pretend that one hand is a cell phone and the other is tapping out a text message. Asking them to continually text as a realistic manner of looking down, then up and around, then down again.
- ✓ Start the music (you can use the Main Menu from the DVD) and play it very loud. While all of the commotion is happening, walk across the front of the room at a casual pace about four times.
- ✓ Stop the music.
- ✓ Ask all drivers from the car groups to stand up.
- ✓ Ask each of the drivers if they saw the person walk in front of their car while they were being distracted by the car full of people, loud music, texting, and distraction from a passenger.
- ✓ Enforce the fact that due to being distracted, they could have hit the person.

## **Did You See That?**

- ✓ Begin by sharing these results of a study: Drivers in semi-trucks and taxis were videotaped texting while driving. The average length of time was five seconds per text message.
- ✓ Have all students use one hand as a pretend cell phone and the other hand tapping out a message the entire time you count down five seconds (1001, 1002, 1003, 1004, 1005).
- ✓ As you count, casually walk across the front of the room as many times as you can.
- ✓ Enforce the fact that in the time it took to tap out a single text message, someone could have walked in front of their car.
- ✓ Now...show them the stopping distance it would take for their car to have come to a complete stop from the time they looked up, registered that they needed to stop the car, got both hands back on the wheel, applied the brake, and finally got the car to a complete stop...if they had been driving about 35 mph.
- ✓ Have one student hold the end of a 100 foot measuring tape but don't tell them how long it is. Have another student take the end and start walking...and walking...and walking...until they reach the 100 foot mark.
- ✓ Enforce that 100 feet is about the distance it would take for their car to come to a complete stop once they realized someone had walked in front of it.

## **Acting Out**

- ✓ Break the students up into groups of three. Have the students write a two-minute scene that involves risky driving behaviors in some way. The scene does not necessarily need to take place inside a vehicle.
- ✓ Have the students act out the scenes in front of the class.
- ✓ Variations:
  - Assign each group a different genre, such as Western, Horror, Shakespearian, or Comedy. Have the student write their scenes for that genre.

## **Starting Where You Left Off**

- ✓ Have each group of students improvise a scene, with each scene's first word being the last word from the previous group's scene.

## **Catching Their Eye**

- ✓ Have something in your hand (i.e., bean bag) that you can toss to someone in the audience while you're talking.
- ✓ Notice how all the students will watch the bean bag?
- ✓ Use this to illustrate another distraction that can cause them to take their eyes off the roadway for a brief moment.
- ✓ Discuss that operating a vehicle takes 100% of their attention at all times.

## Focus and Vision

- ✓ Have the students stare at what the person next to them is wearing and focus on the details of the clothing. Instruct them not to look forward until told to.
- ✓ At the same time show a slide and discuss teen collision statistics or other important information.
- ✓ Then have them look forward.
- ✓ See if they can tell you what was on the slide and what you spoke about.
- ✓ Explain to them that during the time they took their eyes off the road for that brief moment, they hit a pedestrian, veered off the roadway, and struck a tree.

## Reflections

This time is intended to give the students an opportunity to quietly reflect on what has been seen or heard. Each one can be a prelude to dialogue or kept private to be used as a turn-in assignment for class credit. The same questions are also available on the website resources page: [www.impactteendrivers.org/resource](http://www.impactteendrivers.org/resource). The dialogue can be done in small groups, large groups, or as a writing assignment for personal reflection.

- ✓ Have the students watch the DVD “What’s Lethal” classroom video (also found on [www.impactteendrivers.org](http://www.impactteendrivers.org)). When finished, have the students pull out a piece of paper and write a sentence or two about each of the following:
  - o What kind of choices did the teens featured in the video make?
  - o What were the consequences of those choices?
  - o If you drive, what kind of choices have you made in the past that could have caused a crash?
  - o Do passenger’s choices affect the driver? If so, how?
  - o What other consequences can distracted driving cause besides those shown in the video?
  - o Once the students have finished, have them share and discuss their answers.
- ✓ Your friend has just bought a new car and wants to take you for a ride. He or she is driving through your neighborhood 20 miles over the speed limit. What would you say?
- ✓ After showing a personal video story from the DVD or website, ask the students: “If you knew you were going to die or kill someone because you were speeding, texting, or distracted while driving (use what’s relevant to the collision in the testimonial), what would you say to your family or the family of the person you killed?”
- ✓ Discuss the possible repercussions of a collision caused by distracted or inexperienced driving (i.e., death, guilt, debilitating injury, disfigurement). Discuss the permanence of these conditions and how it can affect your life or the lives of others.
- ✓ How important is it that you always pay attention to what is around you? Why?
- ✓ A defensive driver anticipates danger to avoid crashes. Give examples of defensive driving.
- ✓ How can passengers help with defensive driving?

## LESSON PLAN: MATH/PHYSICS QUESTIONS

1. How far does a vehicle traveling at 55 mph go in five seconds? Compare this to the length of a football or soccer field. Would you be able to safely take your eyes off the road for five seconds?
2. Force = Mass \* Acceleration. A mom chooses to hold her child instead of buckling them into a child safety seat. The vehicle is traveling at 30 mph.
  - a. What is the force an infant weighing seven pounds will exert during a crash?
  - b. Would the mom be able to continue holding the child during the crash? Why or why not?
3. Hydroplaning can occur when driving on roads on which about 0.2 inches of water has accumulated. Suppose there is a heavy downpour where it is raining at a rate of four inches per hour and there is a depression on the road that does not drain. All of the water in this depression does, however, get splashed away when a car drives over it.
  - a. How long will it take for the depression to fill to the point where it will lead to hydroplaning? Time =  $(0.20 \text{ in}) / (4 \text{ in/hr}) = 0.05 \text{ hr} \times (60 \text{ min}) / (\text{hr}) = 3 \text{ min}$
  - b. Suppose that you are driving in the carpool lane and a car was in that lane two minutes ago. Will you hydroplane and probably lose control of your car?  
No. The water in the depression will have accumulated to a depth of less than 0.2 inches so your car will not hydroplane.
  - c. Suppose that you are driving in the carpool lane and no other car has used that lane for the last four minutes. Will you hydroplane and probably lose control of your car?  
Yes. The water in the depression will have accumulated to a depth of greater than 0.2 inches so your car will hydroplane.
  - d. How will the above calculations affect how you drive in the rain?  
If there are not many cars driving in my lane, I should slow down a lot because it is likely that I will hydroplane in areas of the road where there are small depressions. It is best if I drive in the lanes that are most used, not ones that are hardly used at all.
4. How far can a car traveling at 60 miles/hour go in:
  - a. 0.1 seconds
  - b. 0.5 seconds
  - c. 1.0 seconds
  - d. 2.0 seconds
  - e. 5.0 seconds
5. Traveling at 60 miles/hour:
  - a. Estimate how far you will travel when you turn around to talk to a friend in the back seat. Assume it takes two seconds for this to happen.
  - b. Estimate how far you will travel when you search for a CD in the glove compartment. Assume it takes one second for this to happen.



- c. Estimate how far you will travel when you turn to the side to see if the space next to you is clear for passing.
  - d. The low beams of your headlights will allow you to see about 160 feet in front of you at night. How long does it take your car to travel this distance?
  - e. Most drivers need about 1.5 seconds to react to a new situation. How far will your car travel in this time interval?
  - f. After the brakes are applied to a car traveling at 60 mph, the car needs about 227 feet to stop. Considering reaction time (about 1.5 seconds) and braking distance, how long a distance will it take to stop if you see a problem up ahead at night? Why does this show the dangers of driving at night?
  - g. What are the safety implications of these calculations?
6. When drunk, the reaction time of the average driver doubles from 1.5 seconds to 3.0 seconds.
- a. How far will a drunk driver's car travel before it stops if it was traveling at 60 mph?
  - b. When talking on a cell phone, the reaction time of the average driver also doubles from 1.5 seconds to 3.0 seconds. How far will a "cell-phone-driver's" car travel before it stops if it was traveling at 60 mph?
  - c. What are the safety implications of these calculations?

*Questions 3-6 provided by Dr. Lawrence D. Woolf, Staying Alive: The Physics, Mathematics, and Engineering of Safe Driving. <http://www.sci-ed-ga.org/modules/driving/parts/StayingAlive.pdf>*

## LESSON PLAN: Injuries and Economic Cost

**Assignment 1:** Have students review journal and newspaper articles for injuries sustained in a motor vehicle collision.

1. What injuries are associated with not wearing your seat belt?
2. Are you more likely to sustain injuries from your seat belt or from being ejected from the vehicle? Of those ejected from the vehicle, what percentage survive?
3. Children should use a booster seat until they are 4'9" tall. Why was this height recommended? What injuries could occur if a child used an adult seat belt before they have reached that height? How does using a booster seat prevent these injuries?
4. Looking at either local or national newspapers, how many motor vehicle wrecks involved teenage drivers and passengers? Did these wrecks involve violations of the graduated driver's license? Was anyone injured or die in this wreck? Could the injuries or death have been prevented? Why or why not?

**Assignment 2:** Have students contact area businesses to find out the cost of a motor vehicle wreck.

1. Insurance Companies. What is the cost of repairs or replacement? Do premiums increase after a collision? Do you have liability coverage? If you did not have insurance, how much would this collision cost you out of pocket?
2. What are the hospital costs, ambulance, and emergency personnel fees? For severe injuries what would the cost be for surgery, extended care, and rehabilitation?
3. Taxpayers cover the cost of police and fire response, road clean-up, and directing traffic around a collision. If you had to pay this out of pocket how much do you think this would cost?
4. Adding all this up, would you be able to afford the cost of this wreck?
5. What is the financial burden of permanent disability? If you were unable to work or take care of yourself how would you support yourself?

# RESOURCES

## TEACHER RESOURCES

- [www.adph.org/teendriving](http://www.adph.org/teendriving)
- [www.adph.org/injuryprevention](http://www.adph.org/injuryprevention)
- [www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety](http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety)
- [www.cdc.gov/injury](http://www.cdc.gov/injury) (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control)
- [www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org) (National Safety Council)
- [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)
- [www.countdown2drive.org](http://www.countdown2drive.org)
- [www.NDteedriver.com](http://www.NDteedriver.com)
- [www.impactteendrivers.org](http://www.impactteendrivers.org) (California Office of Traffic Safety)
- [www.teendriving.aaa.com](http://www.teendriving.aaa.com) and [www.aaafoundation.org](http://www.aaafoundation.org) (AAA)
- [www.NHTSA.gov](http://www.NHTSA.gov) (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)
- [www.saferoads4teens.org](http://www.saferoads4teens.org) (Saferoads 4 Teens Coalition)
- [www.speakuporelse.org](http://www.speakuporelse.org)
- [www.drivingskillsforlife.com](http://www.drivingskillsforlife.com) (Ford's Driving Skills for Life)
- [www.teendrivessource.org](http://www.teendrivessource.org) (Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, CHOP)
- [www.actoutloud.org](http://www.actoutloud.org)
- [www.teensafedrivingillinois.org](http://www.teensafedrivingillinois.org) (Illinois Operation Teen Safe Driving)
- [www.toyotateedriver.discoveryeducation.com](http://www.toyotateedriver.discoveryeducation.com)
- [www.toyotadrivingexpectations.com](http://www.toyotadrivingexpectations.com)
- [www.distractions.gov](http://www.distractions.gov)
- [www.focusdriven.org](http://www.focusdriven.org)
- [www.adtsea.org](http://www.adtsea.org) (American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association)
- [www.sfprojectignition.com](http://www.sfprojectignition.com)
- [www.iihs.org](http://www.iihs.org) (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety)
- [www.aliveat25.us](http://www.aliveat25.us)
- [www.dps.state.al.us/public/driverlicense](http://www.dps.state.al.us/public/driverlicense) (Alabama Driver Manual)

## PARENT RESOURCES

- [www.adph.org/teendriving](http://www.adph.org/teendriving)
- [www.adph.org/injuryprevention](http://www.adph.org/injuryprevention)
- [www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety](http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety)
- [www.cdc.gov/injury](http://www.cdc.gov/injury) (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control)
- <http://teendriving.aaa.com/AL/>
- [www.parentingteendrivers.com](http://www.parentingteendrivers.com)
- [www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org) (National Safety Council)
- [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)
- [www.countdown2drive.org](http://www.countdown2drive.org)
- [www.NDteendriver.com](http://www.NDteendriver.com)
- [www.impactteendrivers.org](http://www.impactteendrivers.org) (California Office of Traffic Safety)
- [www.teendriving.aaa.com](http://www.teendriving.aaa.com) and [www.aaafoundation.org](http://www.aaafoundation.org) (AAA)
- [www.NHTSA.gov](http://www.NHTSA.gov) (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)
- [www.drivingskillsforlife.com](http://www.drivingskillsforlife.com) (Ford's Driving Skills for Life)
- [www.alfadrivesmart.com](http://www.alfadrivesmart.com)
- [www.betterteendriving.com](http://www.betterteendriving.com) (State Farm)
- [www.teendriversonline.org](http://www.teendriversonline.org) (Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, CHOP)
- [www.stokes.chop.edu/programs/injury](http://www.stokes.chop.edu/programs/injury) (CHOP, Center for Injury Research and Prevention)
- [www.safedrivingtest.com](http://www.safedrivingtest.com)
- [www.toyotateendriver.discoveryeducation.com](http://www.toyotateendriver.discoveryeducation.com)
- [www.toyotadrivingexpectations.com](http://www.toyotadrivingexpectations.com)
- [www.distractions.gov](http://www.distractions.gov)
- [www.adeca.alabama.gov/clickit](http://www.adeca.alabama.gov/clickit)
- [www.focusdriven.org](http://www.focusdriven.org)
- [www.sfprojectignition.com](http://www.sfprojectignition.com)
- [www.iihs.org](http://www.iihs.org) (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety)
- [www.aliveat25.us](http://www.aliveat25.us)

## TEEN RESOURCES

- [www.RULethal.com](http://www.RULethal.com)
- [www.alfadrivesmart.com](http://www.alfadrivesmart.com)
- [www.t-driver.com](http://www.t-driver.com) (Texas Transportation Institute: Teens in the Driver Seat)
- [www.adph.org/teendriving](http://www.adph.org/teendriving)
- [www.adph.org/injuryprevention](http://www.adph.org/injuryprevention)
- <http://teendriving.aaa.com/AL/>
- [www.NDteendrivers.com](http://www.NDteendrivers.com)
- [www.speakuporelse.org](http://www.speakuporelse.org)
- [www.impactteendrivers.org](http://www.impactteendrivers.org) (California Office of Traffic Safety)
- [www.teendriving.aaa.com](http://www.teendriving.aaa.com) and [www.aaafoundation.org](http://www.aaafoundation.org) (AAA)
- [www.drivingskillsforlife.com](http://www.drivingskillsforlife.com) (Ford's Driving Skills for Life)
- [www.alfadrivesmart.com](http://www.alfadrivesmart.com)
- [www.actoutloud.com](http://www.actoutloud.com)
- [www.betterteendriving.com](http://www.betterteendriving.com) (State Farm)
- [www.teendriverssource.org](http://www.teendriverssource.org) (Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, CHOP)
- [www.toyotateendrivers.discoveryeducation.com](http://www.toyotateendrivers.discoveryeducation.com)
- [www.toyotadrivingexpectations.com](http://www.toyotadrivingexpectations.com)
- [www.distractions.gov](http://www.distractions.gov)
- [www.adeca.alabama.gov/clickit](http://www.adeca.alabama.gov/clickit)
- [www.focusdriven.org](http://www.focusdriven.org)
- [www.sfprojectignition.com](http://www.sfprojectignition.com)
- [www.iihs.org](http://www.iihs.org) (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety)
- [www.aliveat25.us](http://www.aliveat25.us)

# CONTRACTS

# PARENT AND TEEN DRIVER CONTRACT

## A PARENT'S GUIDE TO USING THIS CONTRACT

### Why do a driving contract?

Alabama has the second highest rate of teen driver fatalities.

- If your child dies during the teenage years, the most likely cause will be a vehicle wreck.
- Your teenage driver is in danger of killing or injuring himself or herself or other innocent people.
- If you don't do a contract, you will likely be vague in your rules and directions about driving.
- If you don't do a contract, you can count on a lot of subsequent arguments based on "I thought you said..." or "I thought you meant..."
- The contract signals the teenager that driving is a serious and potentially deadly activity.

**Use this contract as a model. Feel free to edit and personalize it to your situation.**

If two parents are involved, both parents should reach an agreement about the contract before it's discussed with the teenager. Sign it and provide a copy to the teenager. **DO NOT ALLOW A TEENAGER TO DRIVE INDEPENDENTLY UNTIL THE AGREEMENT IS NEGOTIATED, WRITTEN, REVISED, AND SIGNED! DON'T LET YOUR TEEN DRIVE WITHOUT AN AGREEMENT.**

**Set a date to revise it after a period of time during which the teen drives.** Schedule the review date and put it on the calendar. On this review date, go through it and change the agreement a little (or a lot) based on experience. Make it stricter if the teen's behavior with the car warrants that. Make it a bit more lenient, perhaps, if the teen is doing well. **START WITH A FAIRLY STRICT CONTRACT.**

**Alabama GDL Law.** An Alabama driver with a graduated license (16-year-old drivers, as well as 17-year-old drivers licensed less than six months) may not:

1. Have more than **one\*** non-family passenger other than the parent, guardian, or supervising licensed driver at least 21 years of age.
2. Operate a vehicle between **12 a.m.** and **6 a.m.** unless:
  - accompanied by a parent or legal guardian
  - accompanied by a licensed adult 21 years of age or older with parental consent
  - going to or from their regular place of work
  - going to or from a school-sponsored event
  - going to or from a religious-sponsored event
  - driving due to a medical, fire, or law enforcement emergency
  - driving to or from hunting/fishing activities in possession of required licenses\*



3. Drive while operating any non-essential handheld communication device\*

**Violations will result in an extension of the graduated license period and/or suspension of the license.** \*New restrictions added in 2010

**Consequences. This contract establishes only one consequence for violations of the contract:** Suspension of *independent* driving privileges. It is important that young drivers continue to practice driving to increase their skill level. If your teen violates the contract he or she will have their independent driving suspended, but can continue to drive with a parent or legal guardian.

The only difference between Category A and Category B rules is that parents may choose to give a warning for the first violation of Category B rules. Category A rules call for immediate suspension of independent driving privileges.

**Alcohol and drug use.** While the contract has the young driver acknowledging that underage drinking is illegal, it also includes a statement that if the young person drinks, he or she will not drive for 24 hours. Some parents read this as permission to drink. It is, rather, an acknowledgment that people break laws and do reckless things.

**Limits on passengers.** This is an essential rule. There is a very direct relationship between the number of passengers in the car with a teenage driver, and the likelihood of an accident. It also, of course, increases the number of potential deaths or injuries. We highly recommend not exceeding a limit of one passenger during the first year of driving.

**“Getting it.”** Teenagers may quickly sign it, without really “learning” the rules. Even if they do learn them, they may forget them. To make sure both the parent and teen understands what is being asked and agreed to, both should read and initial each item. I encourage you to think of creative ways to assure that they have really understood and retained the rules.

Some suggestions:

**Require your child to read the entire contract to you, aloud.**  
**Before signing, sit down together, read each item together, and discuss.**  
**Occasionally ask questions. Ex: “What does the contract say about curfew?”**

This is a modified Parent-Teen Contract. If you would like more information or want to see the original please visit [www.parentingteendrivers.com](http://www.parentingteendrivers.com) or contact Dale Wisely, Ph.D. at [dalewisely@gmail.com](mailto:dalewisely@gmail.com)

# PARENT AND TEEN DRIVER CONTRACT

The new driver and one or both parents must initial each point to show it is read and understood:

**I recognize that driving a car is an extremely serious matter. I recognize that...**

\_\_\_\_\_ I will obey laws regulating driving. I will observe and obey posted speed limits. I will obey rules established by my parents. I recognize these are for my protection and the protection of others.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that the car I drive is the **property of my parents**. Even a car that is a "gift" to me is still, legally, the property of my parents. I drive the car **only with permission**.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that my parents and I must be able to reach this **written agreement** in order for me to be permitted to drive. I understand that the terms of this agreement may be changed, to be more or less strict, based on how I handle the freedom and responsibility of driving.

\_\_\_\_\_ In some cases, this contract is more restrictive than the law. I understand that my parents have the right to place more restrictions on my driving than is called for by the law.

**This contract establishes penalties for violating driving rules. The penalties involve suspending my independent driving privileges for a length of time to be determined by my parent(s). During this time, I will not be allowed to drive without a parent, guardian, or other responsible adult (determined by the parent) in the car.**

## **A. RULES CALLING FOR SUSPENSION OF INDEPENDENT DRIVING PRIVILEGES WITHOUT FURTHER WARNINGS**

\_\_\_\_\_ **These rules, if violated, will lead to suspension of independent driving privileges.** I will not be let off with a warning. I understand that I may lose my independent driving privileges **for as long as my parent decides** if any one of these is violated even once.

\_\_\_\_\_ **If my parents deny me permission to drive, for whatever reason, I will obey this and give them my keys immediately with no argument or debate. If I drive in defiance of my parents' order not to drive, this contract is cancelled and no independent driving (driving without a parent or guardian in the car) will be permitted until further notice.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **I will wear my seat belt every trip, every time.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **No driving with passengers who are not wearing seat belts.** I will wear my seat belt at all times and require all passengers to wear them. I will check to make sure all belts are fastened before I drive. **This includes ANY driving of any distance with no more passengers than the vehicle is designed to carry.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Limit on passengers.** I understand that the presence of other teenagers in the car with me will increase the chances of an accident. I will, therefore, always have limits on passengers while I am a teenage driver. Immediately after I receive my license, I will not be allowed to have any teenage passengers except by permission of my parents for a specific situation, such as carpooling to school. As I gain experience, I will be allowed one passenger. Over time, this will be subject to review.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Texting, Cell Phones, MP3 Players, GPS System.** I will not use cell phones, MP3 players, or any other electronic device while driving. I will pull over for other operations of cell phones and electronic equipment.

\_\_\_\_\_ **I will not leave the scene of an accident, no matter how minor, without the permission of police officers and/or my parents.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Informing parents about accidents & police encounters.** I will inform my parents about any and all tickets, accidents, and encounters with police (including warnings.)

\_\_\_\_\_ **No thrill-seeking/stunts.** I will not engage in any thrill-seeking behavior while driving. I will not drive for recreation. Driving too fast, racing of all kinds and any kind of "stunt" involving a car is NOT ALLOWED. Driving is for transportation ONLY.

\_\_\_\_\_ **No alcohol use/abuse.** It is illegal for me to drink alcohol. However, if I do break the law by drinking anything alcoholic, I will not drive for 24 hours.

\_\_\_\_\_ **No drug use/abuse.** I will not drive for 48 hours after my last use of any "substance." "Substance" means any drug or chemical (including but not limited to marijuana, pills, inhalants, and other drugs) which would be expected *by my parents* to alter my ability to drive. **There is no acceptable amount of any substance of this kind.** This rule may include medications prescribed to me or over-the-counter medications. In the cases of legal medications, I will inform my parents of any such medications I have taken so that they can judge whether taking these medications will interfere with my driving ability.

\_\_\_\_\_ **No alcohol or drugs in car.** I will not allow alcohol or illegal drugs in the car. This includes over-the-counter medications (cough medicines, etc.) when I have reason to believe someone has them in their possession for purposes of abuse. My parents will hold me responsible for any alcohol or drugs in the car, even if they don't belong to me or it is the fault of someone riding in my car.

\_\_\_\_\_ **No riding with others who have used alcohol or drugs.** I will not ride as a passenger with any driver who has used alcohol or any substance as defined above.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Alternatives to riding with others who have used alcohol or drugs.** If I find myself in a situation as described above, I will contact my parents or another designated adult to arrange for transportation. *I understand that my parents will appreciate that behavior and will make every effort to avoid asking me a lot of questions about it.*

## **B. RULES WHICH MAY RESULT IN A WARNING OR SUSPENSION OF INDEPENDENT DRIVING PRIVILEGES**

**First violation may lead to warning or suspension of driving privileges. If a violation is repeated after a warning, independent driving privileges will be suspended for a length of time to be determined by my parents. NOTE:** *These are strict rules, some of which may be revised when we review this contract in a few weeks.*

\_\_\_\_\_ **Permission to Drive.** When I first begin driving by myself, I must ask permission to drive each time I drive. Exceptions to this rule will be given for regularly scheduled transportation to school, work, regular meetings, etc. I will ask permission to drive to specific locations and will discuss the route planned. I will be certain that my parents know where I am. I will not make unscheduled stops or side trips.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Curfew.** When I first begin driving by myself, I may not drive after \_\_\_\_\_ **p.m.** This curfew will be reviewed and possibly revised on the date of contract review. (See date on the last page.)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Staying in touch.** When I am away from my parents, I will inform them of exactly where I am. I will call my parents when I have arrived at the intended location, before I change locations, and before I start my trip home. If my first call does not reach my parents, I will try all available numbers and leave messages at each.

\_\_\_\_\_ **No one else drives vehicle.** I will not permit any other person to drive the car without my parents' specific permission for each specific case.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Weather/road conditions.** I will respect weather and road conditions, slowing down as needed for safety. I will contact my parents to discuss weather or poor road conditions before I begin driving.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Emotional upset.** Knowing that judgment and driving skills are altered by emotions, I will not drive when I am upset or angry. If upset, I will contact my parents for transportation and I reserve the right to maintain my privacy regarding personal matters. My parents agree not to ask a lot of unnecessary questions.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Taking care of vehicle.** It is my responsibility to protect the car I drive. I will keep it reasonably clean and maintained. I have some specific responsibilities regarding the maintenance of the car as noted below:

\_\_\_\_\_ **Friends ride only with their parents' permission.** When transporting my friends, I will be reasonably sure that they have their parents' permission to ride with me.

\_\_\_\_\_ **No eating & driving.** I will not eat while driving. This is a distraction to my safe driving.

\_\_\_\_\_ **No rushing.** Accidents are more likely to happen when I rush. I am more likely to rush when I leave late. Therefore, my parents reserve the right to not allow me to drive unless I leave by a time they specify. For example, if my parents tell me that I must allow 20 minutes to get to something that starts at 7:00, ***I may not leave later than that.*** In such cases, my parents will attempt to provide alternative transportation, to whatever extent possible.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Pay attention to driving.** I will not do things while driving that distracts me from the road. No applying makeup, getting things in and out of a purse or back-pack, etc. I will wait until I arrive at my destination or pull over somewhere safe.

### **C. RIDING WITH OTHER YOUNG DRIVERS**

The most common age at which people are killed as passengers in cars is when they are teenagers. Therefore, my parents will set limits on who I may ride with and under what conditions I may ride with them.

\_\_\_\_\_ I must ask **permission** every time I ride with any driver other than my parents. I promise to truthfully inform my parents who the driver is, how many passengers will be in the vehicle, and truthfully answer any other questions they ask me.

\_\_\_\_\_ I may not ride with any **new driver** who has had their license for less than six months.

\_\_\_\_\_ Rather than ride in an unsafe situation, I will **contact my parents** or another designated adult to arrange for transportation.

\_\_\_\_\_ If I feel **unsafe** while riding with someone, I will do what I can to get out of the car and contact my parents.

## D. SPECIAL ITEMS

\_\_\_\_\_ **Tickets and moving violations** will result in suspension of my driving privileges for a period to be determined by my parents. My parents have no obligation to pay my fines for driving-related tickets.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Financial.** I will make certain financial contributions to the purchase of the car, maintenance of the car, and/or insurance. My contributions are currently as follows (optional):

\_\_\_\_\_ ***My parents agree to follow all traffic laws, including wearing a seat belt, to be a role-model for safe driving.***

\_\_\_\_\_ **Right to clear expectations.** My parents have a right to expect me to be responsible. *I have a right to be told what this means.* For this reason, I may ask my parents for clarification of their requirement that I "be responsible."

**Changes in this agreement.** I understand that this contract will be made more strict at any time my parents believe that is the best thing to do. I understand that if I consistently abide by these rules that my parents will work with me to make the contract less strict as I gain experience. However, I understand that--bottom line--it is my parents' choice and responsibility to change or not change the contract.

**Summary:** I agree to abide by the rules in this contract and I accept the consequences and penalties if I do not. I recognize my parents' authority in deciding if I may drive. That authority is final until I am an adult living independent of my parents. I further agree that "forgetting" something in this contract is not a valid excuse.

### Signatures

DRIVER \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

PARENT(s)/Guardian(s) \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

**THIS CONTRACT WILL BE REVIEWED AND POSSIBLY REVISED ON**

\_\_\_\_\_ (date).

This is a modified Parent-Teen Contract. If you would like more information or want to see the original please visit [www.parentingteendrivers.com](http://www.parentingteendrivers.com) or contact Dale Wisely, Ph.D. at [dalewisely@gmail.com](mailto:dalewisely@gmail.com)



## Friend-to-Friend Contract

Alabama has the second highest rate of teen driver deaths in the United States. I will do whatever it takes to decrease that risk for myself and my friends. My friends are really important to me. I am signing this agreement to show them how much I care about them. I hope my friends will also include me in their contracts.

**I understand that driving a vehicle can be fun and lead to more independence. However, I also know that it is an extremely serious matter.** (Please initial each item)

### I promise...

\_\_\_\_\_ I will wear my seat belt every trip, every time. Seat belts save countless lives in vehicle wrecks. It is also the law in Alabama. I know that violations will result in an extension of the restrictions (on my graduated driver's license) by six months or until I reach 18 years old.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will not begin driving until all the passengers have on their seat belts.

\_\_\_\_\_ As a new driver I know it takes a lot of concentration to drive a vehicle and watch out for other drivers and hazards that may come up. Adding additional distractions can limit my ability to adapt to changing driving conditions. I promise to not read or send texts while driving or use other electronic equipment. I will wait until I can safely stop or pull over to use them.

\_\_\_\_\_ I promise to obey posted speed limits, signs, and traffic lights.

\_\_\_\_\_ I promise to only carry the amount of passengers allowed by the restriction level of my graduated driver's license (GDL), my parents, and for the number of seat belts available.

\_\_\_\_\_ I promise to not drive between midnight and 6 a.m., unless there is an emergency and my parents have agreed. I understand that driving at these hours is not only against the restrictions on my GDL, but also a very deadly time for teen vehicle wrecks.

### Because I care about my friends I promise to talk to them when...

\_\_\_\_\_ I see that they have not buckled their seat belt.

\_\_\_\_\_ If they are about to drive with more passengers than is allowed by their GDL restriction or the number of seat belts available.

\_\_\_\_\_ I promise to not call or text my friends when I know they are driving. I will wait to text them after they have let me know they have arrived safely to their destination.

\_\_\_\_\_ They are driving distracted due to electronics. I will offer to return a text for them, phone calls, or adjust other electronic equipment so that they can drive safely.



\_\_\_\_\_ I will tell them when I feel they are driving too fast or not obeying traffic laws. This can affect their safety as well as my own.

\_\_\_\_\_ If they asked me to drive somewhere between midnight and 6 a.m. I will say no. If an emergency arises we will contact our parents or call 911.

**I am signing this agreement and will abide by the statements above. My friends and I can add additional items, but will not take any off the agreement. Having my friends sign this agreement shows that they care about me and my safety and know that I will protect them as well.**

**DRIVER** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**FRIEND** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**FRIEND** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**FRIEND** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Motor Vehicle Occupant Safety Survey (2003). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov)
8. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Injury Prevention and Control: Motor Vehicle Safety. [http://www.cdc.gov/Motorvehiclesafety/Teen\\_Drivers/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/Motorvehiclesafety/Teen_Drivers/index.html)
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